

merged osteosynthesis in connection with increased swelling of an extremity.

Key words: amputations; aseptic necrosis; crush syndrome; earthquake; fractures; infections; treatment

E-mail: arnaz@mail.ru

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Being on the Alert in Hospital Services: Estimate of Preparation of the Emergency Staff for Facing an Influx of Victims

F. Mortreux; C. Ngono Nti; J. Bouquillon; G. Mannekens; L. Serien; E. Guevart

Service des Urgences, Hôpital Saint-Vincent, Lille, FRANCE

Introduction: In the anticipation of a great number of victims following a catastrophic event, every hospital has an intervention plan ready to face that exceptional situation. The aim of that plan of alert of in-hospital services (MASH plan) is to optimize the reception and the treatment of the victims of that particular catastrophe, and take care of the usual emergencies at the same time. It also must allow for the reception of the victims' families. The emergency staff represents the first line in the good development of an exceptional situation. Every member of that staff, whichever his/her charge is, should know the existence of the MASH plan, how it works, what has to be reorganized in his/her service, and the part s/he has to play, as modest as it can be.

Methods: A survey was conducted in February 2001, among the emergency staff of Saint-Vincent, a 170 bed General Hospital in Lille, to identify what knowledge of the MASH plan they had. That survey consisted of 20 simple questions essentially aiming at four main points: (1) the alert, (2) the practical organisation of the emergency service, (3) the reception of the victims, families, and people involved, and (4) the part everyone must play.

Results: The survey was completed by 92.8% of the emergency staff (65/70). The average longevity was 4.7 years. The name "MASH" was unknown to 16.9% of the staff; 36.9% of the staff had no idea where the reception of the victims is, and 90.8% had no idea where the reception of the families is. A large majority (87.7%) of the respondents didn't know their part in case the MASH plan is started, and only 7.7% know how to reorganize the emergency service in that case.

Conclusion: Considering these points, information sessions have been organized to improve the efficiency of the staff in case of an influx of victims. The staff will be reevaluated using the same questionnaire, the objective being to get 50% right answers for each question. The members of the emergency team will be asked to update and improve the Saint-Vincent hospital MASH plan.

Key words: emergency department; families; hospital; MASH; multiple casualties; organization; plan; preparedness; training

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The Impact of Euro 2000 on Activities of All Emergency Departments of the City of Brugge

Nicolas Müller MD; Patrick Martens, MD

Department of Emergency Medicine and Critical Care, General Hospital Sint Jan/ Riddershove, Bruggel, BELGIUM

Introduction: Organization of huge sports events always is associated with an increase in medical risks. Public authorities warn hospitals to increase the number of medical doctors and nurses in the Emergency Departments during these events. Political authorities are put under high public pressure to ensure an increased medical deployment.

In the city of Brugge, three qualifying football matches and one quarter final were played. No game was considered risky by the organizing committee. A literature review defined the expected risks, and hence, the resources that needed to be deployed. Prior football games with severe mass riots were analysed regarding the effective hospital admission rate. This analysis helped us decide to use the daily emergency medical care to provide the backbone for medical deployment. Three mobile intensive care units were deployed in the stadium. In addition, we used the usual provincial disaster plan to upgrade our medical supplies in case of mass casualty emergencies.

Methods: During the whole tournament, both emergency departments of the city of Brugge collected data about Euro 2000-related pathology. Data regarding the pathology treated in the stadium as well as for all patients admitted to the hospital were reviewed.

Results: These data confirm that the organization of a European football tournament does not increase significantly the activities in the emergency departments of a "play-city". Only 24 Euro 2000-related patients visited the emergency departments during the whole tournament. The majority of their pathologies were alcohol-related. The daily increase in patients never exceeded 8%. Only two patients had to stay in the hospital for a period of more than 12 hours. Even analysis of the data of the days that the home nation, Belgium, was playing did not show any statistical increase in admittance rate of patients.

Conclusion: We conclude that political instances as well as public opinion put high pressure on the medical authorities during major sports events. However, the data collected proved that preparedness and a higher level of alertness is sufficient to guarantee a high level of medical safety.

Key words: alcohol; emergency departments; mass gatherings; patient loads; sports events

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Do Computer Programs Perform Better Than Human Regulators in Mass Casualty Disasters?

Nicolas Müller, MD;¹ Henri Muller (Malek), Dr HC;² Patrick Martens, MD¹

1. Department of Emergency Medicine and Critical Care, General Hospital AZ Sint Jan, Brugge, BELGIUM

2. Department of Industrial Management, Ghent University, BELGIUM